

394
His Majesties
GRACIOUS
SPEECH,
Together with the
Lord Chancellors,
To Both HOUSES of
PARLIAMENT,
On Thursday the 15th. of February, 1676.

Published by His Majesties Special Command.



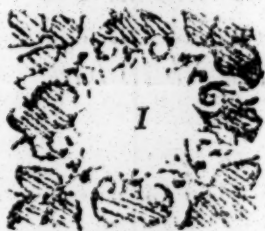
Reprinted at Dublin by Benjamin Tooke, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majesty and are to be sold by Joseph White Book-seller in Captham Street, 1676.

RB.23 2.9746



His Majesties Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday the 15. of February, 1676.

My Lords and Gentlemen,



Have called you together again after a Long Prorogation, that you might have an opportunity to repair the misfortunes of the Last Session, and to recover and restore the right use and end of Parliaments.

The time I have given you to recollect your selves in, and to consider whither those differences tend, which have been so unhappily managed and improved between you, is enough to leave you without all excuse, if ever you fall into the like again.

I am now resolved to let the World see, That it shall not be My fault if they be not made happy by your consultations in Parliament.

For I declare My Self very plainly to you, That I come prepared to give you all the satisfaction and security in the great concerns of the Protestant Religion, as it is established in the Church of England, that shall reasonably be asked, or can consist with Christian prudence.

And I declare my Self as freely, That I am ready to gratifie you in a further securing of your liberty and property (if you can think you want it) by as many good Laws as you shall propose, and as can consist with the safety of the Government, without which there will neither be liberty nor property left to any man.

Having thus plainly told you what I am ready to do for you, I shall deal as plainly with you again, and tell you what it is I do expect from you.

First, I do expect and require from you, That all occasions of difference between the Two Houses be carefully avoided; for else they who have no hopes to prevent your good resolutions, will hope by this reserve to hinder them from taking any effect.

And let all men judge who is most for Arbitrary Government, they that foment such differences as tend to dissolve all Parliaments; or I, that would preserve this and all Parliaments from being made useless by such dissensions.

In the next place, I desire you to consider the necessity of building more Ships, and how much all our safeties are concerned in it.

(4)

And since the Additional Revenue of Excise will shortly expire, you that know me to be under a great burden of Debts, and how hard a shift I am making to pay them off at first, I hope will never deny Me the continuance of this Revenue, and some reasonable supply to make My condition more easie.

And that you may be satisfied how impossible it is (whatsoever some men think) to support the Government with less than the present Revenue, you may at any time see the Yearly Establishd charge; by which it will appear, That the constant and unavoidable Charge being paid, there will remain no Overplus towards the discharging those Contingencies which may happen in all Kingdoms, and which have been a considerable charge to Me this last Year.

To conclude, I do recommend to you the Peace of the Kingdom, in the careful prevention of all differences, The safety of the Kingdom, in providing for some greater strength at Sea, And the prosperity of the Kingdom, in assisting the necessary charge and support of the Government.

And if any of these good Ends should happen to be disappointed, I call God and Men to witness this day, That the misfortune of that disappointment shall not lie at My door.

The rest I refer to the Chancellor.

THE

(s)
The Lord Chancellors SPEECH.

*My Lords and you the Knights, Citizens, and
Burgesses of the House of Commons,*



Y the most Gracious Pleasure of the King, you are here againe Assembled to hold another Session of this Parliament, Wherein the King expects your Advice and your Assistance, Your Advice in Matters of the highest Deliberation, Your Assistance in Matters of Extream & pressing Difficulty. Your Deliberations will chiefly be Exercised about those Things which do belong unto your peace, The peace of the Church and the peace of the State, Two Considerations of so close a Connexion between themselves, that in the very Original Writ of Summons, by vertue of which you still sit here, they are Joyntly Recommended to your Counsel and your Care.

The peace of the Church is harder to preserve than the peace of the State, For they who desire Innovations in the State, most Commonly begin the Attempt upon the Church.

And by this means it comes to pass, That the peace of the Church is so often disturb'd, not onely by those poore mistaken Soules, who deserve to be pittied, but by malicious & Designing Men, who deserve to be punished. And while Things continue in this Estate, it cannot be avoided but that the Laws which are necessary to restrain the Malicious, must and will sometimes disquiet and wound those that are Weake.

What Remedies are fit for this Disease, whether the Fault be in the Laws, or in the Men, in the Men that should Obey, or in the Men that should Execute, Whether the Cure be a Worke of Time and patience, or of Zeale and Diligence, Or whether any new Expedient can be found to Secure the Ship from that Storme which the swelling of two contrary Tides seems to threaten, is wholly left to your Advice, the King hath Called you for that End, and doubts not but your Councils will be such as shall tend to Safety and to Establishment.

The peace of the state requires as much of your care and vigilance too: our peace at home, and our peace abroad.

As for that abroad, We are at this time, blessed be God for his mercy to us, and blessed be the King for his care of us, in perfect peace with all the Nations upon earth: Such a peace as makes us the Envy of the Christian World, and hath enabled us to do our selves Right against the Infidels: Such a peace as brings with it all the fruits of peace, and deserves not onely our prayers for the continuance of it, but our best and most watchful care that nothing may be done on our part to give it an Interruption.

But then we must consider again, that our peace abroad will not subsist any longer than while we do maintain our peace at home; for without this, no Kingdom can be able to Act in its full strength, and without that, the Friendship or Enmity of any Nation ceases to be considerable to its Neighbours.

Now tis a Great and a dangerous Mistake in those, who think the peace at home is well enough

enough preserv'd, so long as the Sword is not drawn; whereas in truth nothing deserves the name of peace, but Unity.

Such an unity as flows from an unshaken trust and confidence between the King and his people, from a due Reverence and obedience to his lawes, and to his Government, from a Religious and an Awful care, not to remove the Ancient Landmarks, not to disturb those constitutions which time and publique convenience hath settled, from a Zeale to preserve the whole frame and order of the Government upon the old Foundations, and from a perfect detestation and Abhorancy of all such as are given to change. Whatever falls short of this, falls short of peace too.

If therefore there be any Endeavors to renew, nay if there be not all the Endeavors that can be to extinguish the Memory of all former provocations and offences, and the occasions of the like for the future. If there be such divisions as beget Great thoughts of Heart, Shall we call this peace, because it is not War, or because men do not yet take the Field? As well we may call it Health when there is a Dangerous fermentation in the Blood and Spirits, because the patient hath not yet taken his Bed.

And yet as Evident as it is that all we have or hope for depends upon the preservation of our peace and unity at home, As certain as it is that no care to preserve it will be wanting here, Nevertheless it remains still to be wisht that even this very point were no part of those difficulties we are now to struggle with.

For there are many more which without your Ayd and your Assistance can never be overcome.

One is the weakness of our Fleet; for Strength & Weakness can no otherwise be judg'd of than by comparison: And by this measure we may truly judge our Fleet to be less Considerable than it was, because ours stands at a Stay, while our Neighbours round about us are improv'd.

This is an Affair wherein no time would be Lost, because whenever we set about it, it will take up some considerable time before it can be finish'd.

Another weight there is which lies very heavy upon the Revenue, and that is the Debts which encumber it: Justice and honour oblige the King not to forsake those who have assisted him with their Estates in the Defence of the publique. And although the necessary issues of his Revenue, in the many new and chargeable Emergencies of state, did for a while postpone their satisfaction, Yet his Majesty hath now gone very far in it, and hath provided for the security and payment of an immense Summe, with such Difficulties as none but a Just and Generous Prince would ever have undergone.

And now should the rest of his Revenue fail, or fail to be unloaden in some Degree, the inconvenience to the publique, and the Insecurity of all our Affaires would quickly be to manifest.

One Difficulty more there is, without which all the Rest were none, and that is the strange Diffidence and Distrust, which like a General Infection begins to spread it selfe into, almost all the Corners of the Land.

Much

Much of this rises from the Artifice of ill Men who create and nourish all the Suspicions which they can Devise; But the Cure of it lies perfectly in Your Hands, for all this will presently Vanish as soone as Men shall see your Acquiescence, and the fruits of it in a cheerfull concurrence with His Majesty to all those good and Publique Ends which He hath now so Earnestly Recommended to You.

It would be somewhat strange; and without all Example in Story, that a Nation should be twice ruin'd, twice undone, by the self-same way and means, the same *Fears* and *Jealousies*.

Will any man that doth but give himselfe leave to Think, refuse to Enjoy and take Comfort in the Blessings that are present, onely for feare of future Changes and Alterations?

Surely 'tis enough for any Kingdome, and more than most Kingdomes in the World can boast of, to have their Affaires brought into such a Condition, that they may in all Humane probability, and unlesse it be their Owne Default, continue for a Long Time safe, and Happy.

Future Contingencies are not capable of any Certain prospect: A security beyond that of Humane probability, no Nation ever did, or ever shall Attaine to.

If a Kingdome be Guarded by Nature against all Dangers from without, and then will Rely too much upon what Nature hath done for them; If a Kingdom be Warn'd and caution'd against all Dangers from within, by former Experiences, and then will either forget, or make no Use of those Experiences; If a Kingdome be Powerful in Shipping and Navigation, and then see their Neighbors Endeavouring to Overpower them that way, without being solicitous enough to Augment and Reinforce their owne Naval Strength; If a Kingdom be Happy in the frequent Assemblies of their Great Councils, where all that is grievous may be Redrest, and all that is wanting may be Enacted, and then will render those Councils uselesse and impracticable, by continuing endless Distractions; Who can wonder if their Affaires should begin to be lesse Prosperous, when otherwise, Humanely speaking, and in all common Probability, their Condition would have been out of the Reach of Fortune, and their Security in a manner impregnable.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

If the presaging malice of our Enemies should pretend to foretell any such Fate as this to befall us, the wisdom and the Magnanimity of this Great Council will quickly be too hard for all their Auguries. The Honor and the Loyalty of this August and Venerable Assembly Will leave no kind of roome for any such Divinations.

You that have the Happiness to Live under so Excellent a Monarchy, so Admirable a Constitution and Temper of Government, You that remember what the want of this Government cost us, and the miserable Desolations which attended it, have all the Motives, and are under all the Obligations that can be to Secure and advance the Interest of it.

The King on his part meets you with so Open and so Full a Heart, and is so Absolutely Resolv'd and Determin'd to do all that in Him lies to Glad the Hearts of his people, that it must be the strangest Infelicity in the world, if either He or His Subjects should meet with

any

any Disappointments here.

For the King hath no Desires but what are publique, no Ends or Aims which terminate in Himself. All His Endeavors are so entirely bent upon the Welfare of All His Dominions, that He doth not think any man a good Subject who doth not Heartily Love His Country: And therefore let no man pass for a good Patriot, who doth not as Heartily Love and serve his Prince.

Private men indeed are subject to be misled by private Interests, and may Entertain some vain and slender hopes of Surviving the Misfortunes of the publique, But a prince is sure to fall with it, and therefore can never have any Interests Divided from it.

To Live and Die with the King is the Highest profession a Subject can make, and sometimes 'tis a profession onely and no more; But in a King it is an absolute necessity, 'tis a fate inevitable, that he must Live and Die with his people.

Away then with all the vain Imaginations of those who labour to infuse a Misbelief of the Government; Away with those ill meant distinctions between the Court & the Country, between the Natural & the politique Capacity, & let all who go about to persuade others that these are two several Interests, have a care of that precipice to which such principles may lead them; For the first Men that ever began to distinguish of their duty, never left off till they had quite distinguish'd themselves out of all their Allegiance.

My Lords and Gentlemen

The King hath so long had, and still retaines such honourable Thoughts of these assemblies, that we ought to make it one great part of our Business to deserve the continuance of His Majesties Grace and good Opinion.

Let no Contention then come near this place, but that of a Noble Emulation who shall Serve his Country best, by well Serving of the King; let no passion enter here; but that of a pious Zeal to lay hold upon all opportunities of promoting the Honour and Service of the Crown, till our Enemies despair of ever profiting by any Disorders amongst us.

And let all who pray for the long Life and Prosperity of the King, add their Endeavors to their prayers, and study to prolong this Sacred Life, by giving Him all the Joys of Heart which can arise from the Demonstrations of the Lively and the Warm Affections of His people.

F I N I S.

